

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 AID-05

OC-06 CCO-00 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 SSM-03 SCCT-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6255

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 15: SYRIANS WITHDRAW FROM SIDON AREA

AS WAS APPEARS ENTER LULL; EXPECTED ARAFAT VISIT TO DAMASCUS

RAISES HOPES

REF: BEIRUT 6219

1. SUMMARY: LONG-PROMISED SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM SIDON AREA IS WELCOME RESPITE FOR PALESTINIANS. CHRISTIAN DELEGATION RETURNS FROM DAMASCUS CONFIDENT OF SYRIAN ASSURANCES. BEIRUT BUZZING WITH TALK OF NEW POSSIBLE SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN UNDERSTANDINGS ON CEASEFIRE ARRANGEMENT. WAS GOES ON AT REDUCED LEVEL, PARTICULARLY IN TRIPOLI AREA AND AROUND BAALBEK. STILL RESISTANCE AT TELL ZAATAR, BUT BEIRUT CONFRONTATION LINE REVERTS TO LULL IN ARTILLERY ACTIVITY AND INCREASED SNIPER FIRE. AUH HAS FOUND SEVERAL CASES TYPHOID IN BEIRUT AREA, IS PESSIMISTIC ON HEALTH SITUATIONIN COMING WEEKS. END SUMMARY.

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2. INTEREST FOCUSES ON SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM SIDON AREA. PALESTINIANS, ARAB LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVES AND CORRESPONDENTS ACCOMPANIED SYRIAN COLUMN AS FAR AS MARJEYOUN. WITHDRAWAL REALLY BEGAN LATE JULY 14 FOLLOWING SEVERAL DAY' DELAY. SYRIAN MOVE HERE BEING COMPARED TO JUNE PULLBACK FROM BEIRUT AIRPORT. SUPPOSITION IS SYRIA WISHES GIVE ARAB LEAGUE OPPORTUNITY PROVE IT CANNOT STOP LEBANESE CIVIL WAR WHILE AVOIDING TOO NEGATIVE A PRESS IN ARAB WORLD. NEW SYRIAN TROOP ENTRIES TO JEZZINE AREA JULY 13 ENCOURAGE SPECULATION SYRIANS INTEND REMAIN NEARBY, READY TO RETURN TO SIDON IF NECESSARY. COL. ABOU MOUSSA, COMMANDANT OF PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST COALITION FOR SOUTH LEBANON, TALKING OF REOPENING OF SIDON PORT FOR RESUPPLY OF AREA. SYRIA WELL AWARE LIBYAN INTENT SHIP ARMS TO PALESTINIANS. PALESTINIANS IN SIDON AREA WELCOME SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL, BUT THERE ARE REPORTS OF APPREHENSION IN CHRISTIAN VILLAGES IN AREAS WHICH FEAR RETALIATION IN ABSENCE OF SYRIAN PROTECTOR.

3. CHRISTIANS CONCERNED OVER SYIRAN PULLBACK, BUT CLAIM ASSURANCES FROM ASSAD. RADIO AMCHIT QUOTES ASSAD THAT SYRIA INTENDS PURSUE ITS INITIATIVE "TO THE END" EVEN THOUGH IT HAS NOIBOPENED WAY FOR JOINT ARAB ACTION. LEBANESE FRONT DELEGATION RETURNED FROM DAMASCUS REPORTING ASSURANCES LEBANON WOULD NOT BE ABANDONED BY SYRIA, THOUGH ASSAD NOW UNDERLINING CEASEFIRE EFFORTS AND NEED TO INTENSIFY SEARCH FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION. RADIO AMCHIT SAID TWO SYRIAN CONDITIONS FOR SIDON WITHDRAWAL WERE: 1) RESTITUTION OF ALL DAMAGED SYRIAN EQUIPMENT AND 2) INCLUSION OF SYRIANS IN AL FORCES NOW TO BE STATIONED IN SIDON AREA AND EXLUSION OF TROOPS OF ANY COUNTRY SYRIANS CONSIDER PARTY TO LEBANESE CRISIS, THAT IS, IRAQUIS AND EGYPTIANS. SYRIANS DEMANDED SAME CONDITIONS BEFORE WITHDRAWAL FROM BEIRUT AIRPORT IN JUNE.

4. PRESS HEADLINES PROJECT JULY 16 DAMASCUS VISIT OF YASIR ARAFAT. RADIO LEBANON (LEBANESE ARAB ARMY) GIVES CREDIT TO LIBYAN PREMIER JALLOUD WHILE OTHER SOURCES CONFIDENTIAL

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CREDIT ARAB LEAGUE. JALLOUD MET JULY 14 WITH ARAFAT AND SAID TO HAVE DISCUSSED "NEW SYRIAN PROJECT FOR RECONCILIATION OF DAMASCUS AND PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE." SYRIAN PROJECT SAID BASED ON PALESTINIAN ACCEPTANCE OF CEASEFIRE IN EXCHANGE FOR SYRIAN RETREAT, TO BE FOLLOWED BY POLITICAL DIALOGUE TO CONSOLIDATE CEASEFIRE AND DEFINE SITUATION OF ARAB PEACE FORCES IN LEBANON. PARALLEL LEBANESE/PALESTINIAN FORMULA ALSO BEING

DISCUSSED IN POLITICAL CIRCLES, WITH FATHER YOUAKIM MOBARAK ONE OF PRIME MOVERS. PLAN SAID TO INCLUDE CEASEFIRE AND STATIONING OF ARAB PEACE FORCES NOT ONLY AT HOT POINTS BUT AT NERVE CENTERS OF WEST BEIRUT, AND OTHER LEFTIST-CONTROLLED REGIONS. JUNBLATT AND ARAFAT SAID TO DEMAND THAT, IF ARAB FORCES STATION IN WEST, THEY SHOULD ALSO BE STATIONED IN EAST.

5. LEBANESE WAR APPEARS GOING INTO ANOTHER PERIODIC LULL, FOLLOWING RIGHTIST/SYRIAN VICTORIES AT TELL ZAATAR, IN BEKAA AND IN NORTH LEBANON. FIGHTING COUNTRY-WIDE HAS DIMINISHED DURING PAST 48 HOURS. BAALBEK AND NORTH LEBANON REMAINS WARMEST SPOTS. IN BAALBEK LEFTISTS CLAIM FIGHTING CONTINUES, BUT KATAEB RADIO CLAIMS SYRIAN ARMY CONTROLS ENTIRE VILLAGE. IN NORTH, TRIPOLI REMAINS ENCIRCLED WITH RIGHTISTS EXERTING PRESSURE FROM SOUTH ON MEJDELAYA, DEDDE AND KALAMOUN AND SYRIANS CONTINUING PRESSURE FROM NORTH ON PALESTINIAN CAMPS OF NAHR EL-BARED AND BEDDAOUL. MUTUAL ARTILLERY EXCHANGES CONTINUE BETWEEN TRIPOLI AND ZGHORTA.

6. SITUATION ELSEWHERE REMAINS UNCHANGED. CONTRADICTORY COMMUNIQUE CONTINUE TO MUDDY TELL ZAATAR SITUATION WHERE IT APPEARS POCKETS OF STUBBORN RESISTERS PURSUE HOPELESS FIGHT. ARTILLERY DUELS CONTINUE BETWEEN NABAA/SIN EL-FIL AND RIGHTIST POSITIONS AT MANSOURIEH AND SURROUNDING AREAS. CHIA/AIN AL-RUMMANEH REMAIN ACTIVE, INCLUDING SOME SMALL-SCALE GROUND OFFENSIVES. IN CENTRAL MOUNTAINS, SPORADIC FIGHTING AND BOMBARDMENTS CONTINUE IN CAZAS OF ALEY, NORTH METN AND KESROUAN. IN BEIRUT, FIGHTING ALONG CONFRONTATION LINE AND BOMBARDMENTS HAVE DIMINISHED, AND, IN USUAL

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PATTERN, SNIPER ACTIVITY INCREASES DURING LULL PERIOD.

7. CHIEF OF PUBLIC HYGIENE SERVICES AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY/BEIRUT, DR. APHTIM AKRA, ANNOUNCES DISCOVERY SEVERAL CASES TYPHOID IN BEIRUT AND SURROUNDING AREAS. AKRA SAYS HE VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT COMING WEEKS AND EVEN FORECASTS "BLACK AUGUST" IF LACK OF WATER AND MEDICINES PERSISTS.
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